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Your essential daily news | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2016

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Eric Anstey laughs as he checks his outfit in the mirror prior to a Zumba class in Lower Sackville on Monday.
JEFF HARPER/METRO



DARING TO CARE

Sackville man doing some crazy things in the name of family

metroNEWS

Standing up to violence

HOMICIDES IN HALIFAX

City working on policies in wake of shootings



**Zane
Woodford**
Metro | Halifax

After a violent year in Halifax, the municipality is working on a public safety strategy designed to prevent violence from happening and provide support for communities when it does.

HRM public safety officer Ted Upshaw gave a presentation to the municipality's board of police commissioners during its meeting on Monday outlining what his office is doing in response to recent gun violence that saw three men shot dead in nine days.

"We have an issue going on today. We have violence going on in our streets. We have to figure out how we can deal with that and stop that today and potentially tomorrow,"

Upshaw told the board. "That's huge for us, to bring the feeling of safety to the community."

Upshaw said meetings have been happening over the past month between the municipality, the province and communities about what can be done, and said a small working group is putting together what will become the municipality's public safety strategy.

The strategy will be wide-reaching, Upshaw said, looking at long-term change in issues including racism, poverty, housing, employment and mental health.

"We have to have patience, and recognize that if we look at something today, it's not necessarily going to help, unfortunately, that person that now lies in the street," he said. "But if we do it right, we'll be able to help their brother or sister or somebody in that community."

There have been 12 homicides in the municipality this year. Police have laid charges in six of them.



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FENTANYL

City being armed with naloxone kits

Police in the Halifax Regional Municipality are being armed with a weapon to fight overdoses caused by the powerful opioid fentanyl.

Halifax District RCMP Chief Superintendent Lee Bergerman told the municipality's Board of Police Commissioners during its meeting on Monday that 70 per cent of RCMP officers in the district have been provided with naloxone kits.

Naloxone is used to reverse the effects of opioids like fentanyl, at least until emergency care is available. There are injection kits and nasal kits.

RCMP in Halifax have been provided with nasal kits, and Bergerman told the board that the goal is to put kits in the hands of 100 per cent of officers.

Halifax Regional Police Chief Jean-Michel Blais told the board that there are 15 HRP units with injection naloxone kits. He said the force is working on getting nasal kits — which are considered easier to use and increase the number of units

+ DEATHS

Nova Scotia's chief public health officer warned last month that the province had to prepare for a wave of deaths due to fentanyl. At that time, 49 Nova Scotians had died due to fentanyl this year.

carrying them.

"So far it's proven to be extremely valuable," Bergerman told the board. She said there were two overdoses in the municipality last week.

"Fentanyl is here," Bergerman said.

In British Columbia, 755 people have died from illicit drugs this year alone, and fentanyl is blamed for more than half of those deaths. In November alone, 128 people died from illicit drugs, and in one day last Thursday, at least 11 people died from illicit drug overdoses.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS



Injectable and nasal forms of Naloxone can be used to block the potentially fatal effects of an overdose. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

\$19.17

The living wage per hour in Halifax

'Step up' and pay the living wage

INCOME

Advocates want employers to do more as costs increase



Adina Bresge
For Metro | Halifax

The cost of living in Halifax is on the rise, but the living wage for families in the city has dropped by nearly a dollar to \$19.17 per hour this year, according to a recent study.

The Canadian Centre for

Policy Alternatives released a report Monday calculating how much a family of four in Halifax needed to earn this year to pay for basic necessities like food, shelter, and transportation.

Researchers found that while living expenses in Halifax increased by around \$100 per month compared to 2015, it takes a slightly smaller paycheque for families to cover these costs, largely thanks to the new Canada Child Benefit from the federal government.

"Government benefits went up enough ... to absorb the increase in the cost of living," Christine Saulnier, Nova Scotia director for the research

centre, said in an interview.

"We're giving credit where credit is due, and that is to the federal government."

Saulnier said Haligonians who are ineligible for the federal benefit — people without children under the age of 18 — might feel a bit more of a strain on their pocketbooks.

Food costs have increased by \$30.65 per month since last year, according to the report, and the cost of housing in Halifax rose by three per cent.

However, single people don't bear the costs of child-care, which have gone up by approximately \$102 per month since 2015 — the largest percentage increase of any ex-

+ MINIMUM WAGE

The minimum wage in Nova Scotia is \$10.70 per hour for experienced workers, the third lowest rate of any Canadian province.

pense included in the study.

"I hope that some employers will step up and actually pay the living wage," said Saulnier.

"Paying a low wage has an impact on not just your workers, but the entire community. And that's a responsibility on all of us."

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'A big Christmas gift'

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

New duplex welcomes two Halifax families

Nadiah Sakurai
For Metro | Halifax

It was an early Christmas for two families in Halifax on Monday. Despite a cold winter wind, the people who gathered at noon were in a joyous mood as both families entered the newly finished duplex residences.

"I'm thrilled to have my own home. It's just a wonderful experience," Angela Lumsden, mother of one of the families, said.

The homes, located on Drysdale Road in Spryfield, were part of a Habitat for Humanity

Nova Scotia initiative. These are the 54th and 55th homes the organization has helped built since it formed in 1996, and the Lumsdens are the sixth family that have been put into a home this year, according to CEO Marie Franc LeBlanc.

The organization helps families in financial need attain a safe and decent home to live in. Through volunteers and donations, Habitat for Humanity gives a hand to families who build houses that are then sold to them at affordable prices, and with no-interest mortgage rates.

They give families a chance to have their own home that they would not otherwise have gotten.

The Lumsden family, including two children, entered the home in excitement. Grace, the 11-year-old daughter, led the way, pointing things out to her mother.

Maxwell, the two-year-



Angela Lumsden hugs her son Max, aged 2, as they tour their new Habitat for Humanity house.

JEFF HARPER/METRO

old son, walked around the home gleefully. He particularly enjoyed the staircase, which he did not have in his old home.

The Lumsden family had been living in an apartment prior to their new space. They are excited to now have their own home and a lawn they can play in.

"They said there was a possibility to have it before Christmas but I wasn't holding (onto) it because I didn't want to get myself upset too much," Lumsden said.

"To me, it's the biggest Christmas gift I could have ever gotten. It's a big Christmas gift for the family," she said with a big smile.

However, this Christmas gift was not something the Lumsden family were given. They worked for it together with Habitat for Humanity.

The project requires 500 sweat equity hours from the part of the family, LeBlanc said. This means that the families participate in the home building. Although the Lumsden

+ PRIVACY

The other family did not want to be interviewed by the media.

family still has around 150 more hours to complete, they worked together to put their hours in.

"(It's) not a home given to them, (it's) a home they paid for and a home they will continue to pay for," LeBlanc said.

POLICE INVESTIGATION

Up to 75 intimate photos found

Police uncovered up to 75 intimate images of teenage girls in an investigation centring around a single Nova Scotia school, and heard at least one photo was snapped without a girl's knowledge while she was changing, according to court documents.

The details were provided in statements collected by police for a June 1, 2015, application to obtain a search warrant in a case involving the alleged sharing of intimate images by teenaged boys at Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School.

Two 18-year-olds and four 15-year-old boys are facing charges of distributing intimate images of at least 20 high school girls without consent, and possessing and distributing child pornography. Their identities are protected under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The 36-page document was provided to media on Monday at Bridgewater provincial court after Nancy Rubin, a lawyer representing the CBC, made arguments for the release of partially redacted copies. She plans to ask for further details to be released in arguments scheduled for Jan. 11.

The document says about 60 images of girls were sent to one password-protected account on Dropbox, a U.S. file-sharing service, and another 10 to 15 images sent to a second Dropbox account.

The record says the police inquiry began in May 2015 when Bridgewater police detectives received a complaint that students at Bridgewater Junior/Senior were in possession of the images.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

"I'm thrilled to have my own home. It's just a wonderful experience."
Angela Lumsden



Angela Lumsden tours her new house with daughter Grace, 11, and son Max, 2. JEFF HARPER/METRO

AIR CANADA

Shipping delay nearly disastrous for pet shop's living cargo

Adina Bresge
For Metro | Halifax

A batch of live animals are recovering in their enclosures after a harrowing four-day shipping delay at the Halifax airport, according to a pet store manager.

Terri-Ann Crisby said two chinchillas, two hamsters, two geckos and 40 fish were scheduled to be shipped on an overnight flight from Montreal to Gander on Wednesday, but the order was held up during a connection in Halifax en route to

northeastern Newfoundland.

By the time the animals arrived Sunday morning, Crisby said all but 32 fish survived the journey to Pet Central in Gander, N.L., after being stranded without proper care for days due to bad weather.

Crisby said she drove to the airport eight times between Thursday and Sunday, but each time she arrived, she was told her shipment had been bumped.

She called Air Canada to stress that live animals need to be handled differently than everyday baggage.

"I even asked them if they could just open their containers and give them some water and food," said Crisby. "They said because of liability reasons they couldn't."

Growing worried, Crisby called a pet store in the Halifax area, who sent someone to tend to the critters. After nearly 48 hours in transit, the rodents replenished, and the

geckos warmed up on fresh heating pads and gobbled up mealworms.

"I really feel if it wasn't for them going in and feeding the animals and giving them water, they probably wouldn't have survived," Crisby said.

In an emailed statement, a spokesperson for Air Canada said the airline takes great care when transporting "live cargo,"

such as ensuring tropical animals are packed to withstand the cold during "irregular operations."

According to the airline, the pet store's shipment contained goldfish and crickets.

Crisby insists she didn't order any crickets, but said Air Canada was well aware that her order included mammals because they are shipped in see-through containers.

On her final trip to the airport, Crisby said the airline representative who handed the animals to her couldn't bear to check their cages, fearing

the worst.

"Of course, I took them right to the pet store and put them in their habitat," said Crisby. "They're doing well ... but the fish did not survive."

Air Canada said it was difficult to find cargo space for the creatures during their peak season.

Crisby rejects this excuse, saying she's experienced shipping problems with the airline since well before the winter holidays.

"The reason we ordered more animals is because the previous order ... (was) lost in the warehouse," she said.

"They say live animals are their number-one priority. Definitely not." Terri-Ann Crisby on Air Canada

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Eric Anstey takes on his various tasks, all for online videos and to raise money for a fund that commemorates his late cousin. CONTRIBUTED

The '12 dares of Christmas'

CHARITY

Sackville man doing crazy stuff to fund scholarship



Haley Ryan
Metro | Halifax

Eric Anstey has braved many things to honour a family member's legacy — leading a Zumba class dressed as an elf is just the latest.

Anstey of Lower Sackville has been popping up around HRM and in viral videos since last week with his "12 dares of

Christmas" project, focused on raising money for the Rylee Sears Scholarship Fund in honour of his late 16-year-old cousin.

"I really didn't think that at any point it would sort of balloon to what it has, but I couldn't be happier," Anstey said Monday about his videos, which have gained tens of thousands of views.

"My goal was to ... have fun. People are enjoying (the dares), they're laughing about them, which was important for me because I think Rylee would be laughing about them too."

Sears, a Sackville High School student and Sackville Flyers Midget B hockey player, passed away in January 2015 of meningococcal meningitis.

The idea of completing dares as a fundraiser came first, Anstey said, and was inspired by last year's Secret Santa prizes from a colleague. The friend promised Anstey would get different gifts after completing a series of dares, and posting video "proof."

When thinking about who could use the funds, Anstey said he and his wife realized Sears would have graduated this year, and it would be a great thing to "boost" the scholarship.

+ HOW TO GIVE

You can e-transfer a donation to eanstey13@gmail.com.

Earlier this month, Anstey asked for dare suggestions and chose 12, which included strutting in public wearing a wrestler leotard, taking an ice bath, chugging milk, shaving his longtime beard, and on Monday, leading part of a Zumba class — in a felt elf suit.

"I'm not a small guy, so I'm going to be sweating like a champ," Anstey said with a laugh.

Anstey at first thought the videos would only be shared between friends, so he was hoping to raise maybe \$500 — but by Monday he'd reached about \$2,500.

"It's been outstanding and humbling ... how much people have reached into their own pockets and offered donations

at a time of year when I would assume money is tight," he said.

Still to come are some big dares, Anstey said, including eyebrow shaving and eating the hottest pepper he can find — worrying for a man who doesn't like any spice.

Perhaps the most popular dare so far has been Anstey's ode to Cousin Eddie from National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, when he stood on the side of the road holding some tubing in just a robe, hoisting up a can of pop to honking cars going by.

Although Anstey said he's happy people enjoy the dares, it's important that entertainment doesn't distract from what the project's really about: Sears, and the scholarship helping "young

people getting started."

"It's being done in the name of a young man that I had a lot of respect and admiration for, and that has been missed since the day he left," Anstey said.



Rylee Sears CONTRIBUTED

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Canadian hostage, kids seen in video

AFGHANISTAN

Held since 2012, family describes 'Kafkaesque nightmare'

A video showing the two children of Canadian captive Joshua Boyle and his American wife Caitlan Coleman for the first time was posted online Monday as Coleman describes what they call a "Kafkaesque nightmare."

The family has been held by the Taliban-linked Haqqani Network since 2012 — both boys born in captivity. Coleman says the video was made Dec. 3 and as they ask for their freedom she says both her children "have seen their mother defiled."

"We understand both sides hate us," she says. "And are content to leave us and our two surviving children in these problems... We ask quickly that in our collective fourteenth year of



Caitlan Coleman and Joshua Boyle with their children. TWITTER

prison, urge the governments on both sides to reach some agreement to allow us freedom."

Boyle, 33, and Coleman, 31, were kidnapped near Kabul during a backpacking trip through

Central Asia in October 2012. Coleman was five months pregnant at the time and gave birth to their son in custody. They had a second boy in 2015, after what Boyle told his parents was a "7 1/2

month surreptitious pregnancy."

Boyle delivered his second son in the darkness by flashlight. "Ta-da!" he wrote in correspondence seen by Torstar News Service. "The astonished captors were good and brought all our post-partum needs, so he is now fat and healthy, praise God."

Boyle's writings, delivered through intermediaries and written in his tiny penmanship, provided a glimpse into his family's life in captivity.

"We are trying to keep spirits high for the children and play Beautiful Life," he wrote.

Boyle's parents believe this is a reference to the movie in which a father protects his son from the brutalities of a Nazi concentration camp by pretending it is just a game.

The writings also had references to the boys, along with Stompin' Tom Connors lyrics and Mother Teresa quotes, International Space Station and Rudyard Kipling and Thomas Merton poems. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ELECTIONS

Feds want 'moot' hearing on expat voting delayed

Proposed legislation granting long-term Canadian expats the right to vote will render a court fight over the issue moot, the federal government argues in new filings.

As a result, the government is calling for a year-long adjournment of a Supreme Court of Canada hearing — set for February — in which two expats were expected to challenge parts of the Canada Elections Act that have disenfranchised them.

"If Bill C-33 is enacted in its current form, the appellants will have the right to vote in future elections," the government says in its motion to the

chief justice. "An adjournment of the appeal is warranted to allow Parliament to debate and consider the bill."

At issue in the legal battle is a ban on Canadians' voting in federal elections if they have lived abroad more than five years. Ontario's top court has upheld the restriction as constitutional, prompting the pending the Supreme Court challenge.

The government says putting the case on hold until the top court's 2018 winter session would respect Parliament's role in deciding important public policy issues.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C. funeral homes asked to distribute naloxone

As opioid overdoses spike in B.C., the B.C. Funeral Association is recommending members carry naloxone, a drug that can be used to reverse the effects of overdoses, because of the increased likelihood a mortician or other staff will come into contact with lethal opioids like fentanyl.

The number of overdose

deaths related to illicit drugs leapt to 755 by the end of November, a more than 70 per cent jump over the number of fatalities recorded during the same time period last year. The B.C. Coroners Service says fentanyl was detected in 374 of the cases, or about 60 per cent of deaths.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



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A man identified as Mevlut Mert Altintas killed Andrei Karlov, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, shouting: 'Don't forget Aleppo! Don't forget Syria!' AP & GETTY IMAGES

LATEST NEWS

TURKEY

Invoking Syria, gunman kills Russian ambassador

A Turkish policeman fatally shot Russia's ambassador to Turkey on Monday in front of a shocked gathering at a photo exhibit and then, pacing near the body of his victim, appeared to condemn Russia's military role in Syria, shouting: "Don't forget Aleppo! Don't forget Syria!"

People at the art gallery watched in horror as the gunman, who was wearing a dark suit and tie, fired at least eight shots, at one point walking around Ambassador Andrei Karlov as he lay motionless and shooting him again at close range.

The assailant, who was identified as Mevlut Mert Altintas, a 22-year-old member of Ankara's riot police squad, was later killed in a shootout with police. Three other people were wounded in the attack, authorities said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN

Truck rams Berlin Christmas market, killing at least 12

A truck rammed into a crowded Christmas market in central Berlin on Monday evening, killing at least 12 people and injuring around 50 as it tore through tables and wooden stands. Police said a suspect believed to be the driver was arrested nearby and a passenger died as paramedics were treating him.

The popular Christmas market was filled with a mix of tourists and locals when the large truck hurtled into it. Germany's top security official said initial evidence pointed to an intentional act, and the White House condemned "what appears to have been a terrorist attack."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

We need to talk about the real tragedy

The man who killed the Russian ambassador was born in 1994, the year of the Rwandan Genocide, and was 16 when the Syrian civil war started; a child became a man in monstrous times



Vicky Mochama
Metro | Toronto

Angry young men with weapons — trucks, guns, bombs, the Internet — exist everywhere; they have the ability to upend fragile peaces and spark destructive wars. An apparent terror attack in Berlin, and the assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey yesterday are being compared with the initiating acts of World War I.

I don't know if the comparison is fair, but I am concerned that these tragedies will exacerbate the global refugee crisis. According to the U.N. Refugee Agency, there are 65.3 million displaced persons, the largest movement of people since the end of World War I. Nearly a

third of the refugee population comes from Syria (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million) and Somalia (1.1 million).

In fear, they have crossed continents by foot, on trucks, over water and by plane. In danger, they have negotiated with criminal traffickers, marine patrols and refugee camp staff. In hope, they have sent children ahead alone, sold everything to get to anywhere else and prayed for salvation. Too many have received none.

The Syrian crisis hasn't exposed the limits of our humanitarian claims. Dadaab refugee camp's twenty-five years of existence already showed our hand. What appears to be a looming genocide in South Sudan has been met with relative silence. Northern Nigeria remains besieged by Boko Haram. The Syrian crisis



Security guards a Christmas market in Berlin. GETTY IMAGES

has solidified those limits.

It has been over a year since the body of Alan Kurdi made front pages across the world. He wasn't the last child to escape the world's wilful ignorance.

I couldn't help but be struck by the age of the man who killed the Russian ambassador. He was born in 1994, the year of the Rwandan Genocide, and was 16 when the Syrian civil

war started; a child became a man in monstrous times. For him and so many, the global community's "never again" continues to mean "again and again."

Nonetheless, it is a heinous murder that, with its echoes from a century ago, is inexcusable. The true tragedy is that this horrific act further endangers the very people it claims to be defending. More

than half of Syrian refugees have fled to Turkey where they live in a fraught atmosphere. In the last few months, Turkey has experienced a series of terror attacks and a failed coup.

There is no evidence that the gunman was a refugee. That will hardly matter. The example of Kenya and its Somali population shows that refugees easily become political footballs to be tossed around with calculated cruelty.

In Canada, our connection to the plight of the Kurdi family spurred a national response. Whether as duty or as penance, we took in 25,000 Syrians. That is a drop in the bucket. This effort pales in comparison to the scale of the crisis. "Refugees Welcome" should be more than a slogan, it should become our way of life.

UNITED STATES

Obama grants record pardons to 78 people in last-minute clemency push

President Barack Obama has pardoned 78 people and shortened the sentence of 153 others convicted of federal crimes, the greatest number of individual clemencies in a single day by any president, the White House said Monday.

Obama has been granting commutations at rapid-fire pace in his final months in office, but he has focused primarily on shortening sentences of those convicted of drug offences rather

than giving pardons.

Neil Eggleston, Obama's White House counsel, said Obama has now pardoned a total of 148 people during his presidency. He has also shortened the sentences of 1,176 people, including 395 serving life sentences.

Eggleston said each clemency recipient's story is unique, but a common thread of rehabilitation underlies all of them.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Obama pardoned 78 people and shortened sentences for 153 others. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SWITZERLAND

Gunman attacks Zurich mosque

A gunman dressed in black stormed into the prayer hall of a mosque frequented by Somali immigrants and opened fire, wounding three people before fleeing, a Zurich police spokesman said Monday.

Police, who rushed to the scene in a central neighbourhood known for trendy cafes and the city's red-light district, were also investigating a possible connection to the discovery of a corpse at nearby Gessner bridge over the Sihl River, police spokesman Marco Bisa said. Authorities weren't consid-

ering the attack as terrorism. Police also said it was too early to determine whether there might be any link to an incident in Berlin also on Monday, where a truck rammed into a Christmas market.

"The unknown person fired several shots and fled from the building," Bisa said. "The shooting took place inside a prayer room with several people in it. Two victims were severely injured."

Bisa but did not specify the nationalities of the people injured.

At the scene, Abukav Abshirov, a 30-year-old Somali man who works at a Zurich car dealership, said his friend was among the injured. He recalled how they had been celebrating a religious occasion at the centre the night before.

"I am under shock," he said. "We've had great times here. The atmosphere was always friendly and happy at the centre."

Attacks by gunmen are rare in Switzerland. The country was shaken in 2013 by at least two multiple-fatality shootings.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHANTAL HÉBERT ON TRUDEAU AS PARLIAMENTARIAN



Question period has never been a prime venue for intellectual honesty, and Trudeau is not reinventing the genre.

Notwithstanding a spotty attendance record, Justin Trudeau spoke no less than 513 times in the House of Commons — mostly as part of question period — since the 42nd Parliament opened late in 2015.

Over the past year, the prime minister delivered more bromides than policy statements. The day Trudeau rose in the House to declare his intention to set a national floor price on carbon was a notable exception.

But the climate change issue — even as it has been top of mind for the Liberal government since it took power — was not one of the topics most raised with the prime minister in the House this year.

Pride of place in the list of questions put to Trudeau goes instead to political financing and the Liberal practice of offering private face time with the prime minister or one of his ministers in exchange for donations to the party.

Trudeau was asked more than 100 questions related to his and his cabinet's participation in cash-for-access events, and the potential conflicts-of-interest that could arise from the practice.

He dismissed most of those questions with a blanket assurance that all rules were being followed. The record shows that on at least 25 occasions, Trudeau repeated the same an-

swer almost word for word.

In so doing, the prime minister mostly demonstrated the limited virtues of repetition.

At year's end, there remains a glaring disconnect

minister's interventions in the House was on the mandate he claimed he had to change the way Canadians elect their government.

"Sixty per cent of Canadians



COMMONS MAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks during question period on Parliament hill on Dec. 7.

ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

between his contention that the fuss over cash-for-access is unwarranted and the guidelines that state "there should be no preferential access to government, or appearance of preferential access, accorded to individuals or organizations because they have made financial contributions to politicians and political parties."

Electoral reform was the other issue that dogged Trudeau in the House over the past year. He was on the receiving end of more than 40 questions about his promise to introduce a different voting system in time for the next election. Over the year, his intentions became harder rather than easier to pin down.

When a special parliamentary committee was tasked with exploring the issue in June, the focus of the prime

voted in favour of parties that promised to change the current voting system. Canadians clearly indicated that they wanted the most recent election to be the last one conducted under the existing system," Trudeau told the House just before it adjourned for the summer.

But by December, he did not sound as certain or as enamoured of his mandate. "The fact is there are many, many different perspectives across this country on electoral reform," the prime minister told the MPs who wanted to know how he would follow up on the special committee report.

Question period has never been a prime venue for intellectual honesty, and Trudeau is not reinventing the genre. He is hardly the first prime minister to resort to obfuscation

and evasion to talk his way out of unwanted opposition questions. That may be why his stonewalling has so far not exacted much of a political cost.

For all the travel Trudeau does at home and abroad, Canadians would, in theory, be more likely to catch a glimpse of the prime minister in action in the Commons where he appears more regularly than anywhere else.

In practice though, that is not the case.

In its annual tally of Canada's news coverage the Montreal firm Influence Communication found that with the exception of the federal budget, the most reported-on Canadian political events of the past year took place off the Hill.

In its year-end review of 2016 Canadian politics, CTV listed just one story — the adoption of Canada's right-to-die legislation — in which Parliament truly took centre stage.

An Abacus poll published this weekend reported that one third of Canadians had not heard of the fundraising controversy the opposition and the media have so consistently hammered Trudeau about over the past few months.

Almost half said they had not heard of the ongoing online consultation on electoral reform — and that's after the government sent a card about it to every household.

By any measure, much of what happens on Parliament ends up staying on Parliament Hill. That is not just because there are fewer journalists to cover what goes on there. But more on that in a future column.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer.

The skating Oval is good but it could be really great

HALIFAX MATTERS

Tristan Cleveland



I'm blown away every year by the massive success The Oval has been — what a wonderful place for thousands of people to skate together outside.

But I'm also blown away by the wind. The place could be a lot better with a few small changes.

I'll get back to the wind, but first, we need to talk about our new \$2.5-million Pavilion. It has two rooms: one that is small and dark, and one that is big and made of glass with a fantastic view of all the skaters. The building also has two functions: storing skates and giving the public a place to relax and get warm.

How did we decide to cram the public into the small dark room and to give the skates the beautiful view? Did we really build the glass walls to keep skates entertained? It would be less strange if we planted the city's Christmas tree upside down — and less expensive.

This is a no-brainer. Council should direct parks staff to fix the error and give the public a beautiful place to get warm by next winter.

And there's an easy way to pay for the change: set up a vendor inside to sell warm drinks. Imagine families having hot chocolate with their children before

going home, watching thousands skate by. That's what a great winter public space should feel like.

Right now, half the Oval is a beautiful place to skate, with throngs of people chatting and eating beaver tails in a well-lit square near the track. The other half is a dark, wind-swept void.

We need to plant trees around the Oval to help block the wind, and by decorating them, we could make the whole track a great place to be.

We could also use some of the dirt being dug up by developments downtown to create a small hill north of the Oval to further cut the wind. That would, even better, relieve the Commons' flat monotony and create a nice place to linger on summer days.

As it stands, I've heard it said the Commons are not so much a public space, but a poorly drained sports field.

And a facility that's as nice as the Oval deserves its own winter festival. We don't do enough in Halifax to get people outside in the dead of winter, and so we all go a bit bonkers late February. With thousands of people already skating, and a tobogganing hill so close, a festival could be a hit.

In 2017, Halifax is creating a new plan for the Commons. Let's use that opportunity to transform The Oval from a good public amenity into a great one.

Trudeau is hardly the first PM to resort to obfuscation and evasion. That may be why his stonewalling has so far not exacted much of a cost.

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Top health issues of 2017

INSIGHT

Canada's outgoing chief doctor talks future threats

Genna Buck
Metro | Toronto



During his tenure as Canada's official top doctor, Gregory Taylor spent much of his time responding to two viruses that weren't on our radar a few years ago: Ebola and Zika.

"The list of what I didn't get to is very long," said Taylor, who left the post last week.

In between global health crises, he issued reports to parliament on alcohol abuse and family violence and worked on educating the public about how closely health and lifestyle are connected. He even calls the health-care system the "disease care system."

In a wide-ranging conversation with Metro, Taylor outlined the health issues he thinks will dominate the years to come. And he has some ideas for how the next Chief Public Health Officer should face them.

On lifestyle diseases
There's a very long list of things we need to be focusing on. But the top one for

me is lifestyle diseases. These problems are wickedly complicated. And the solutions to these problems are outside the health sector. By lifestyle, I mean obesity, physical activity, poor nutrition. One of the indicators of that is diabetes. Our rates in the last few years have virtually doubled. We're not really getting ahead at all on obesity. It's a reflection of a developed society where we eat ourselves sick.

On healthy cities

We've known for many, many years that the built environment has a huge effect on health. Some cities are very hot and it's hard on some people. The walkability of cities and the availability of rapid transit are extremely important. I work with the age-friendly cities initiative at the World Health Organization. And age-friendly cities are healthy for everyone because they're easy to get around in.

On superbugs

Antimicrobial resistance is a big issue that we're trying to face. Organisms naturally

evolve and become resistant to antibiotics. We've been OK up to now because there've been new ones that have been invented. Well, we've been overusing antibiotics in humans and animals and the rate at which they become resistant has increased. The drug companies aren't producing new antibiotics. This is a real, global crisis, and if we don't address this we're going to go back to the pre-antibiotic era — infections can kill you, and we won't be able to do minor surgical procedures.

On the direction of research

We need research to make sure we're implementing the knowledge and science we already have. It took us 40 years to get tobacco rates down. And we knew for a long, long time how dangerous tobacco was. We focus a lot on educating people. And that's great. But it's not sufficient to do behaviour change. Vaccination hesitancy is a really good example. We have safe, effective, cheap interventions that prevent disease. Yet we have significant



Dr. Gregory Taylor sees lifestyle diseases, antimicrobial resistance and healthier cities as key issues facing his successor as the nation's top medic. ISTOCK/AP; RICHARD LAUTENS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

numbers of Canadians who don't trust that. So how do we convince those to trust us? That's some of the implementation research we need.

On what Canada's next top doctor will face
What keeps me up at night,

and what I assume will keep the next person up at night, is that we really don't know what those unforeseen things are. Nobody could have predicted Ebola. What's next? We're not sure. It's most likely, because of climate change and factors like that, that it's going

to be a vector-borne disease (a disease, like malaria, that is spread from person to person by a vector such as mosquitoes). What keeps me up at night is making sure we have the right staff and the right competencies so that we're prepared no matter what.



It's a reflection of a society where we eat ourselves sick.

Dr Gregory Taylor, on diabetes rates



THE TOP 6@6

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- 6 Martin Garrix ft. Bebe Rexha
In The Name Of Love
- 5 PARTYNEXTDOOR
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HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Can dogs fly? Of course, as long as owners prep well and pooch behaves

Carli Stephens-Rothman
For Torstar News Service

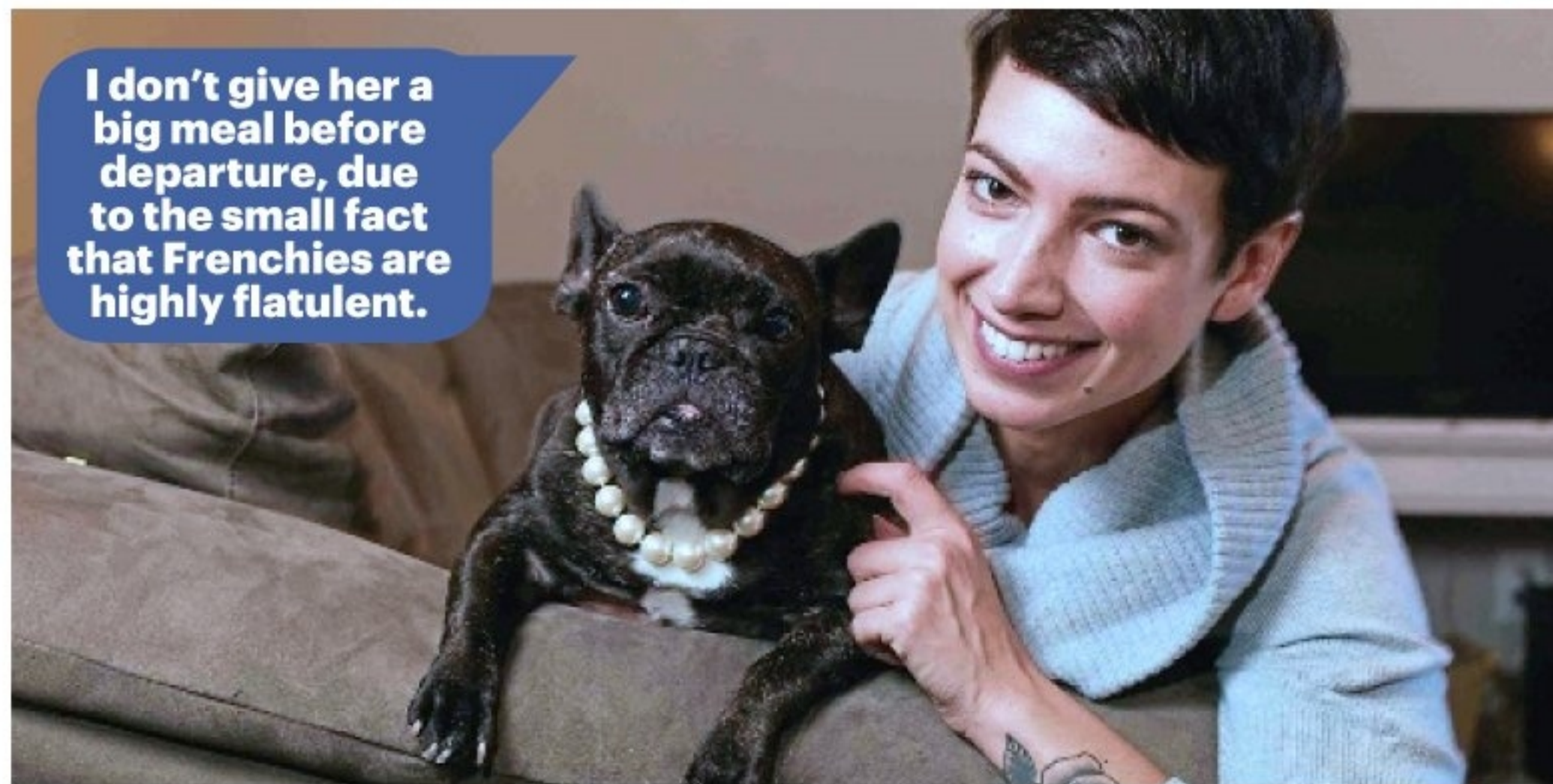
When I arrive at the airport, I have a smile on my face and two brand-name bags strapped to my body. Over my left arm, I've got my new Lug bag, which is both terribly cute and mysteriously convenient. Over my right arm, I'm toting a less stylish, far more cumbersome Sherpa bag. The Lug contains everything I need for a five-day vacation and it's overhead compatible. It's literally a miracle bag. The Sherpa contains only my dog. It's figuratively an anvil.

About five years ago, I decided to stop passing up opportunities to travel simply because I couldn't find a pet sitter. I figured — since she's essentially a loaf of bread with legs, therefore small enough to join me in the cabin — why not? At this point, I don't think twice before including my pet as a fellow passenger.

Last month, flying back to Victoria from Edmonton, a woman came to gush over Fig, my dog, who was peeking out of the carrier as I purchased a pre-flight coffee. "A PUGGG," she squealed in the direction of the Sherpa. I've learned to practise acceptance around people who mistake my Frenchie for other flat-faced breeds. After all, as far as I'm concerned, all cats and all babies look exactly the same.

"She's a French bulldog," I correct her politely. "Does she fly often? Is she quiet on the plane? Does it scare her to be in the air? What if she has

I don't give her a big meal before departure, due to the small fact that Frenchies are highly flatulent.



Carli Stephens-Rothman with her dog Fig, a seven and a half year old French bulldog, complete with pearls. KEN FAUGHT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

to pee? What do the other passengers think?"

I forget sometimes that flying with a pet is an experience not many people have had.

Yes, she flies often — three or four times a year and once I win Lotto 6/49, she'll be sky-bound weekly! Most major hotels keep pet-friendly suites at no extra cost.

Fig is generally a quiet dog, but even more so when we're in flight. Our vet told us that the vibrations of the plane are actually quite soothing, as it reminds dogs of lying up against their mother. So, cruising altitude for me is snoozing altitude for her. As for best potty practices, it's recommended to limit a dog's water intake for

three hours pre-flight. In Fig's case, I don't give her a big meal before departure, due to the small fact that Frenchies are highly flatulent. Let's just say I've skipped many an in-flight movie to watch the drama unfold — a woman nudging her husband accusingly over a fart he didn't commit; his expression of innocence and confusion.

Truth be told, the most challenging part of flying with pets are the people on planes without pets. Not everyone is happy to have an animal on board. I've had people ask to switch seats to be farther from us and once I had someone ask me if

I couldn't just "catch the next one," because "dog-smell" upsets her, as if air travel was like public transit and another flight to Winnipeg would be along in five minutes. In those cases, I just keep my head down and try not to comment on the fact that their smell, a bouquet of duty free perfume, is incinerating my sinuses.

"But what about legitimate pet allergies," you may wonder. Tough Milk-

bones, I guess. Most airlines will help allergy-ridden travellers by switching their seats to be further from the sneeze-inducing creature, but aside from that, allergy sufferers are not left with many options. Air Canada, for example, only allows one pet per flight, but many flights have just that.

If I want to have the privilege of flight with my fur-babe, I have to be respectful. That means answering questions amiably and handling the more fragrant naysayers with grace. It also means following the rules at all times; not taking her out of her bag in the cabin, only walking her on the leash in airports that permit it, having all health-related documents ready in advance and returning to the luggage trolley to collect my bags only after I've taken her outside to relieve herself.

Overall, though the pet carrier's heavy, I feel much lighter knowing my dog's by my side. Travelling with Fig comes down to just this: Passport? Check. Boarding pass? Yep. House keys? Probably not, but I'll figure that out when I get back. Snorting, scratching, farting four-legged beast? It wouldn't be a vacation without one.

JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

Savouring a return trip to wonderland



The SNL cast of 1975 get festive. CONTRIBUTED

THE SHOW: Saturday Night Live Christmas Special **THE MOMENT:** Winter Wonderland

Toward the end of this compilation of skits from SNL's 50-odd Christmas shows, this gem rose up from the very first season.

Dec. 20, 1975. Candice Bergen is hosting. Garrett Morris, in a red sweater and green-and-white striped scarf, begins singing Winter Wonderland into a hand mike. He sings really well. Backing him is the long-haired, bearded SNL house band, dressed as scruffy angels.

After a few bars, Bergen, Gilda Radner, Laraine Newman and Jane Curtin dash onstage and join in around one standing mike. They're wearing red

caps, red T-shirts that read "Merry Christmas," and grey sweatpants tucked into very '70s boots. A few bars later, Chevy Chase, Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi stroll in wearing pea coats and scarves; they add a basso doo-wop. As the song builds to its final verse, low-rent snow begins to fall.

This number was a time machine for me — suddenly I was 13 years old, watching it for the first time on the red Panasonic in my childhood bedroom, in love with the cast and itching for New York. Its no-budget shabbiness was part of the glamour; its thrown-together feel radiated joy.

Everyone looks impossibly young, especially Radner and Belushi, whom we lost too soon. But I didn't feel nostalgia. I was there: in the ache of Christmas, yearning for a big life. It's not that I don't remember who I was or what things were like then. It's the opposite. I still feel like that person. It's the years in between that blur.

SNL returns Jan. 14 to NBC and Global.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.



\$60

Most major airlines flying within Canada accommodate pets, assuming they're under about 10 kilograms, for about \$60 round trip.



Hundreds of Wellington cyclists turned out Tuesday to ride with Lance

Armstrong, who is in New Zealand to film a TV ad

Patriots co-ordinators in line for coaching gigs

NFL

McDaniels and Patricia have helped sustain powerhouse

The Patriots earned a first-round bye in the playoffs — a valuable week off that will let the players rest their legs and the co-ordinators schedule their job interviews.

Josh McDaniels and Matt Patricia have been considered among the best minds in football for a while now. The jobs they're doing this season — their latest gems came in a 16-3 victory over the Broncos on Sunday



Matt Patricia
GETTY IMAGES

— have only bolstered their standing.

McDaniels' best work of 2016 came at the beginning, when he was preparing the offence to go the first four games without Tom Brady while the quarterback served his "Deflate-gate" suspension. Using backup quarterbacks, New England won the first three and scored 81 points. From there, the Patriots' offence has adjusted, as usual, amid a slew of injuries,



Patriots offensive co-ordinator Josh McDaniels confers with quarterback Tom Brady during a recent game in Foxborough, Mass. ELISE AMENDOLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

including that to All-Pro tight end Rob Gronkowski.

Patricia is being lauded for virtually revamping the defence on a near-weekly basis. He has dealt with personnel shuffling — including the off-season trade of Chandler Jones, the early suspension of Rob Ninkovich and the Jamie Collins trade in mid-season — but has also managed to give his defence, devoid of

big stars, completely new looks almost every week, depending on the opponent.

The Patriots (12-2) enter the

final two weeks of the season with the best record in the AFC. They won their eighth straight division title and have already

I can't imagine that there are many other coaches that could present a résumé equal or comparable to theirs.

Patriots head coach Bill Belichick

guaranteed themselves a bye in the first week of the playoffs.

Patricia and McDaniels would be available for interviews during that off week, if they choose. Last month, when the NFL Career Development Advisory Panel put out a preliminary list of head-coaching candidates, it left McDaniels off the list. That came in the wake of reports that the 40-year-old coach was more interested in replacing head coach Bill Belichick someday than starting over elsewhere.

In an un-Patriots-like move, McDaniels went out of his way to say he'd love another crack at a head coaching job. Currently, there are openings in Los Angeles and Jacksonville. In his first shot at being a head coach, McDaniels started 6-0 in Denver, but was fired early in his second season after losing 17 of the next 22. Lowlights of his tenure included a videotaping scandal and his draft pick of Tim Tebow — one of many personnel moves that caused problems and ultimately didn't work out.

"There are only 32 of those (jobs) in the world," he said. "They're opportunities that don't come along very often, and if you would ever be so fortunate and blessed to have another opportunity to do it ... it would be an opportunity that I would look forward to."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

POLITICS

Panthers owner tabbed for defence

Vincent Viola has insisted for the past three years that his sole focus as owner of the Florida Panthers was to win the franchise's first Stanley Cup.

He'll be otherwise occupied now.

Viola's nomination by President-elect Donald Trump on Monday to be the next secretary of the Army means he will be giving up his roles as chairman and governor of the Panthers, pending his confirmation by the Senate.

But the Panthers said the move will not change the day-to-day hockey operations.

"Zero effect on us," Panthers president and CEO Matthew Caldwell said. "His ownership still stays with his family."

There'll be no changes in positions, and nothing for the front office or management team."

Viola, a 1977 West Point graduate who bought the Panthers in 2013, plans to have the chairman and governor positions filled by his longtime business partner Doug Cifu.

The NHL offered Viola congratulations.

"The club has assured us that the day-to-day operations of the Panthers' franchise will not be affected by this development, and we will certainly work closely with the club to ensure that is the case," the NHL said in a statement.

"Mr. Viola and team ownership have further advised that they remain completely committed to South Florida and to the Panthers' fans."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vinnie has proved throughout his life that he knows how to be a leader and deliver major results in the face of any challenge.

Donald Trump

WORLD JUNIORS

Strome to wear C for Team Canada

Dylan Strome was named captain of Canada's team for the world junior hockey championship with Mathew Barzal and Thomas Chabot as alternate captains, Hockey Canada announced Monday.

All three are back from last year's world juniors, where Canada was eliminated in the semi-finals by host Finland.

The choices were no surprise. Strome, an Erie Otter forward who started the season with the Arizona Coyotes, Barzal, a New



Dylan Strome
GETTY IMAGES

York Islanders first-round pick and a Seattle Thunderbirds forward, and Chabot, an Ottawa Senators prospect defenceman from the Saint John Sea Dogs,

are expected to be key players when the tournament opens Jan. 26 in Toronto and Montreal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FIFA

British federations fined for poppy displays

The four British soccer federations were fined Monday by FIFA for displaying poppies at World Cup qualifying matches in November.

England's federation must pay 45,000 Swiss francs (\$58,732) for the "display of a political symbol" at a home match against Scotland on Nov. 11. Scotland was fined 20,000 Swiss francs (\$26,103).

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PREMIER LEAGUE

Injury-time goal gives Liverpool win

Sadio Mane grabbed the winner in the fourth minute of injury as Liverpool beat Everton 1-0 on Monday to head into Christmas in second place in the Premier League and extend its recent dominance of Merseyside derbies.

Substitute Daniel Sturridge's low long-range shot dribbled against the post and Mane tapped

the rebound into an empty net, sparking wild celebrations among Liverpool supporters that saw two red flares thrown onto the playing surface.

Liverpool moved above Manchester City and back to within six points of Chelsea, which has won its last 11

league games.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

227

Monday's match was the 227th Merseyside derby.

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Elegant Leek and Artichoke Frittata



PHOTO: MAYA VISNVEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This pale green beauty comes together in no time with quick-cooking leeks and soft, canned artichokes. Goat cheese and Dijon mustard give it just enough bite.

Ready in 20 minutes

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 leek, washed thoroughly, sliced thinly
- 1 can (14 oz) artichokes, drained
- 8 eggs
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper
- 2 oz goat cheese crumbled
- 3 scallions, sliced

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. In a large, oven-proof skillet, warm up the olive oil over medium heat. Sauté the garlic and leeks until they soften, about 3 minutes. Now add the artichokes and stir.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, Dijon mustard, and season with salt and pepper. Gently pour the eggs over the vegetables in the skillet. Sprinkle the goat cheese and scallions over top.
4. Carefully place the skillet in the oven and bake for 15 minutes, until the frittata is set. Serve with a green salad.

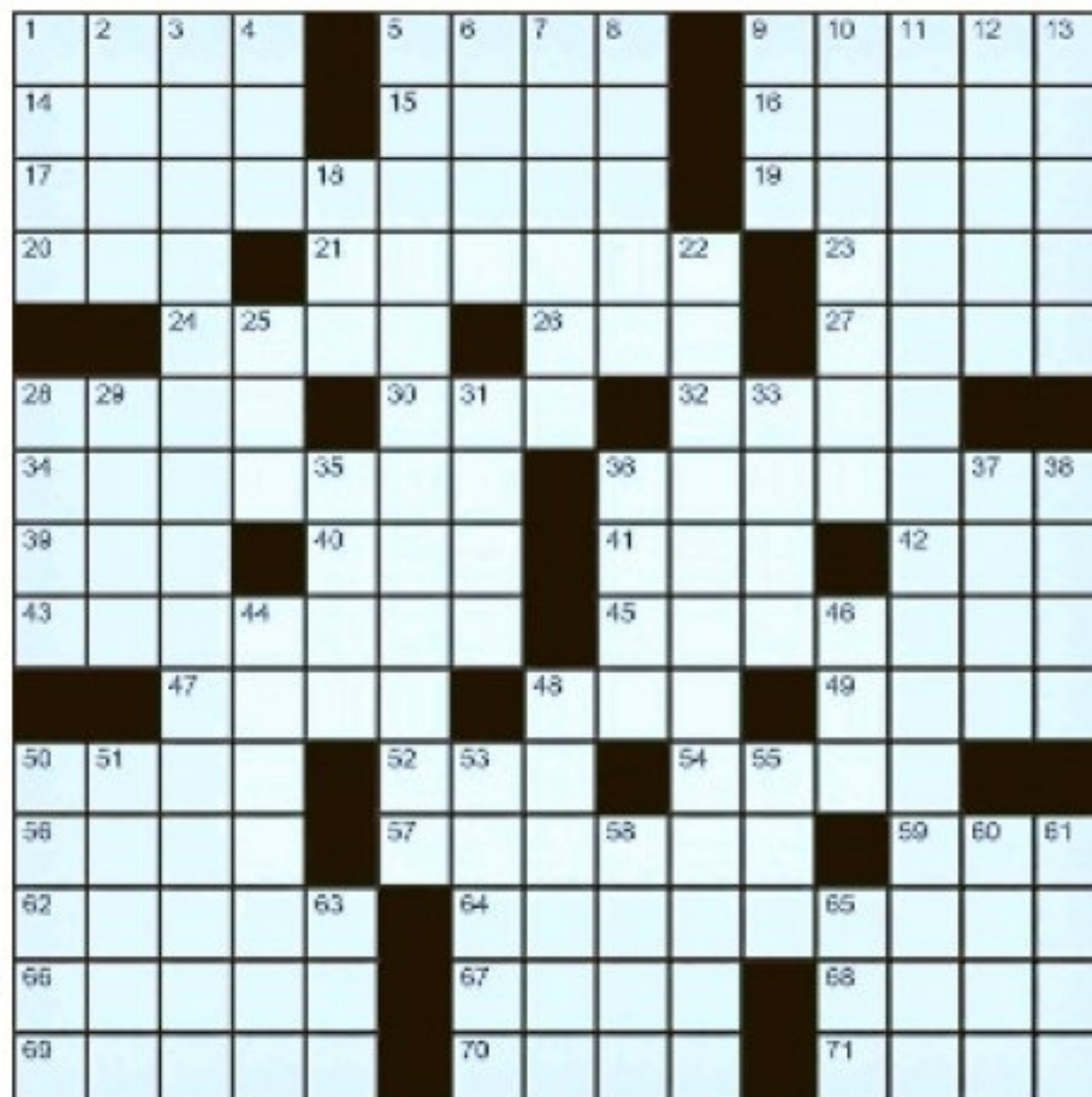
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CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

ACROSS

1. Monsieur Le Pew
5. Sleeves
9. Aunt's hubby, in Quebec
14. Perched above
15. Tooth part
16. "Oh, ___ a wonderful time, thank you." (Couple's departing-a-party comment)
17. Community north of Brandon in Manitoba: 2 wds.
19. Barrel slat
20. T.O. transport provider
21. In and of _
23. Paul McCartney ballad: "Jenny _"
24. "Dedicated to the ___ Love" by The Shirelles
26. "Fantasy Island" souvenir
27. Alberta town
28. Literature heroine Jane
30. "___ for Christmas"
32. Ginger Spice
34. Sloppy Joe sauce brand
36. Carnivorous carves at Christmas
39. Assoc.
40. "Chandelier" singer
41. Sequence, shortened
42. Web connector, commonly
43. Puffin, for one: 2 wds.
45. One acquiring knowledge
47. US campus mil. program
48. Ginger _



49. Macy Gray hit: 2 wds.
50. Bandmate to #32-Across: name + letter
52. Globe's long. crosser
54. Heel height unit
56. ___ the crack of dawn: 2 wds.

57. Arise
59. Hesitant sounds
62. Mia Farrow's activist son
64. Scrooge's sour sentiment: 2 wds.
66. Farewell, in Rome
67. "Shall ___ the table?" (Pre-dinner query)

68. Toolbox item
69. 'Mechanical Resonance' band
70. Red Rose products
71. Firewood-making needs

DOWN

1. Role
2. Coup d'__
3. Home-created Christmas tree decorations: 2 wds.
4. Prefix to 'centre'
5. Santa's toy manufacturing facility is located in this region: 2 wds.

6. Kings: French
7. Road trip accommodations
8. Fashion sense
9. "That hurts!" equivalents
10. CTV, for one
11. Island of Misfit Toys denizen in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"
12. Washed
13. Parades
18. Gambling cube
22. Ice skating formations: 2 wds.
25. Fresh
28. Some punk music fans
29. Lively
31. "If only ___ known."
33. Earth goddess in Das Rheingold
35. "Whose Line ___ Anyway?"
36. Cost
37. River of Flanders
38. Agile
44. Jingly sleigh-puller's bells location
46. Mr. Ocasek
48. Feeling calm: 2 wds.
50. Napoleon marshal, Joachim _ (b.1767 - d.1815)
51. Lyric poem
53. Scope
55. Modern, in Munich
58. Ms. Perlman
60. Govern
61. Boot camp titles, briefly
63. Cacharel perfume
65. Commerce deg.

* IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Observe your interactions with others during the next six weeks, because you could be your own worst enemy. It will be easy to fall into childish, self-defeating behaviour.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You will be aggressive in the coming month when dealing with others, especially groups. This will help you if you coach a team; however, lighten up when with your friends.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Your ambition will be aroused in the next six weeks, which is why you will work hard to achieve what you want. Think about your goals for the coming year.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Your desire to travel will be strong during the next six weeks. Mars wants you to have a change of scenery. Meanwhile, steer clear of controversial issues involving politics, religion and race.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Disputes about shared property and the values of others might arise now. Stay mellow, because one man's meat is another man's poison.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You will have to be extra patient with friends and partners during the next six weeks, because fiery Mars is opposite your sign. Forewarned is forearmed.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You'll find it easy to work hard and give your job everything you've got during the next six weeks. Be careful not to be bossy with others.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is the perfect time for many of you to take a cruise or slip away on a vacation, because you want to play! The next six weeks offer opportunities for fun and romance.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Your home scene will be a bit chaotic during the next six weeks. This means you must be extra patient with family members and others at home.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
All your communication with others will be unusually direct and forthright in the next six weeks. It's a strong time for those who communicate for a living.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You will work hard until February to boost your earnings. Ironically, you also will work hard to spend your money.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Fiery Mars will be in your sign until the end of January, which makes you aggressive and pumped. This will give you lots of energy and help you get things done.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

	1		5	2		8		
8								6
		5			2			
6			3	4				7
9		2		7				3
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1								9
	7		4	5		3		

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8	7	4	2	3	6	1	5	9
2	9	5	1	4	7	6	8	3
3	6	1	9	8	5	2	4	7
6	4	9	8	5	2	7	3	1
5	2	8	3	7	1	9	6	4
1	3	7	4	6	9	8	2	5
7	8	2	5	1	3	4	9	6
9	5	6	7	2	4	3	1	8
4	1	3	6	9	8	5	7	2

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